Chapter 21

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Trust in the University

Introduction

Trust has attracted the attention of higher education scholars in a number of forms and for a number of purposes. Gibbs (2007) has argued that consumers seek trustworthiness when they feel vulnerable and ignorant. This applies especially to universities, because higher education institutions need to help people to reach beyond the frontier of what is known, into the anxiety of what might be knowable. If students trust what universities say about facilitating choice and opportunities for their future, they are more inclined to take what they propose as credible and worthy of participation. It is a loss of public trust, a trust resulting from a reasoned expectation that involves both confidence and reliance that these educational institutions are 'acting responsibly and for the common good' (Bird, 2013: 25).

Importantly, Jameson has concluded that, in an era of marketisation focused mainly on competition, student demand and privatisation, in UK universities there is a perceived 'loss of trust' (2012: 411), at least from Governments' rhetoric and its agencies of quality control. This is not a new observation. As early as 1992, Bok was seeking ways in which U.S. universities could go about restoring public trust; ten years later, O'Neill wrote of 'crises of trust' (2002: 45) and after another decade, Collini made reference to an 'erosion of trust' (2012: 108).

In the context of this chapter I discuss the nature of trust, both in institutions of higher education and the participants within them—students, faculty and other stakeholders—to explore it from

the perspective of competence and empathy. I will argue that the level of trustworthiness a society ought to expect of its higher educational institutions sets them apart from other organisations, and when they fail to match such expectations, they lose the entitlement to support from their host community.

The market context

State-controlled universities, which introduced student fees, achieved significant market engagement through marketing programmes to distinguish themselves at a time of increasing demand and student numbers. Yet meeting this demand and securing their own financial futures is difficult in a marketplace that seeks diversity and hides under a homogeneity of quality and accountability. While it seems feasible for universities to retain the trust of the public and their constituted members, for many this trust is lost, as indicated above, or at the very least has created a crisis for the edifying voice of higher education institutions. Evident in the shift from intrinsic trust in creating socially conscious leaders and their replacement by functionally skilful human resources, it is also manifest in universities' inability to provide a compelling argument for scholarship over economic imperative in their rush to embrace a league table management mentality, adopting whatever metric they are dealt to demonstrate a willingness to be seen as accountable and compliant.

Certainly in the UK they have not been helped by 'putting students at the centre' of higher education, in the sense of the students holding the funding. The government currently lends money to students to take on an often ill-informed responsibility at rates that encourage frivolousness, while taking away supportive central funding. With this shift comes 'engaging in professional marketing activities' (Veloutsou, Paton and Lewis, 2005: 279), perhaps in place of enriching the educational and the common good.

Universities have generally suffered a range of attacks on their sustainability. Significant changes in funding and shifts in priorities towards research that is practical rather than fundamental serve to increase interconnectivity with institutions outside the university (predominantly businesses). A global eagerness for increased participation has changed the structures of universities and the power relationships within them, with an expansion of communities of scholars to include 'market workers'. This economic rationalism is typified in the notion of 'new public management' in universities (e.g. Bleiklie, 1998; Ferlie, Musselin and Andresani, 2008). This approach puts in place vertical line management hierarchies (and power relations) that cut across traditional forms of academic trust built on genuine academic leadership based on notions of collegiality. This is in tension with the professionalism implicit in the peer relationship at the cornerstone of modern science and journal knowledge systems, one of trust and horizontal set of (power) relations.[1] This movement has had an unsettling effect on educational cultures, identities and workloads (Jawitz, 2009).

A consequence of this move to the market has been a marketisation of higher education (Gibbs, 2002; Molesworth, Scullion and Nixon, 2010; Hemsley-Brown, 2011; Gibbs, 2011), and an increasing emphasis by universities on how they promote themselves to potential students. Marketisation and its derivative, marketingisation, has put at risk the nature of education as a distinctive transformative process of the human condition by treating it, for the most part, as undifferentiated consumption. Universities have drawn their marketing from consumer markets best suited to selling chocolate bars, aspirins and supermarket discounts, albeit highly sophisticated and technical. Those that embrace the amorality of the market at a national or global level—that is, almost all—risk educational mission drift and loss of moral trust as they

[1] I am grateful to M. Peters for drawing my attention to this point.

move away from an implicit trust in the development of a civil society to a world that supports and encourages individual goals, needs and satisfaction. These activities run the danger of displaying overwhelming consumerism (Naidoo and Jamieson, 2005).

The impact of these changes is summarised by Hassan, who observes:

> the commercialization of the university is primarily an economic and political process of transformation that has little if anything to do with education, knowledge production and the wellbeing of either staff or students. What is more, these changes are all being refracted through the prism of neo-liberal ideology. (2003: 77)

With consumerism changing students into customers (Molesworth, Scullion and Nixon, 2010; Woodall et al., 2014) and tutors into service providers (Guzmán-Valenzuela and Barnett, 2013), and with ever more vulnerable and naïve students being encouraged to enrol, the higher education market's ethos has become competition rather than sector collaboration. One consequence of such a change is that trust in the common good, once assumed of higher education (Giroux and Giroux, 2004; Carvalho and de Oliveira Mota, 2010), has been shaken by the uncertainty of the market and, as I will argue, needs to be re-built: not on the basis of competence in doing what is taken as trust, regardless of any implicit care for the transacting partner, but on empathetic trust where one considers a wider moral responsibly. The first can be actioned without caring about the person—one can trust the train ticket collector to check my ticket (competence), but not to care about me if I have lost my ticket or had it stolen and to trust me (empathetically) that I am telling the truth not to defraud the railways.

Trust in the university

The nature of liberal education and the ideal of emancipation through rational autonomy led to an evolving, enduring and empathetic delivery. Because it is transformative rather than for an economically defined purpose, liberal education is dependent on a trusting relationship between the owner of the educational process and the recipient; one does not know what one is expected to receive, as it has to be jointly created. In this sense, having trust in the hegemony of state control of education is to believe that it will not be used to exploit and manipulate recipients. A relationship of this nature, engaged in without enduring evidence of trust, is like that of authority: it may be cynically received because it appears to grant power, coercion and control to the party in whom trust has been vested. This may be manifest in forms of persuasion, manipulation of behaviour or psychological compulsion.

Trust has attracted some attention in the field of education. Tschannen-Moran and Hoy's (2000) study of schools is seminal, and in higher education Macfarlane (2009), and Carvalho and de Oliveira Mota (2010) have provided a review of the significance of trust within the university and the building of student institutional relationships. Furthermore, Gibbs (2007) has argued that consumers expect to be able to trust suppliers either to have their best interests, as the purchaser, as a core value or at least not to put their investment in the brand in jeopardy through poor feedback and publicity. This is particularly true of high-cost, poorly understood products such as electronic goods and services, where decision-making can make the purchaser feel vulnerable and ignorant, able to use the 'purchase' but not to understand its complexities or assess any performance claims. This applies especially to first-time attendees at university, because of these institutions' function in helping people reach beyond the frontier of what is known, to what might be knowable. Students having trust in a university has tangible benefits. As Fuller (2014) has speculated, the more one trusts one's educational environment, the more one is likely to

participate and believe in the principles of meritocracy. If society trusts what universities say about how they can facilitate choice and opportunities for a student's future, students are more inclined to take what is proposed to them as credible and worthy of participation.

This Hobbesian relationship, where the more powerful party can change the notion of the relationship to one of reliance, fails Baier's test of moral trust where mutual reliance on the known circumstance of the trust relation is known of each party (1995: 120). That is, one knows more about an issue than another, but keeps quiet even when it is critical to the trusting relationship—being already married and undertaking a second. This is potentially broken in any form of centrally controlled curriculum, the idolatry of learning outcomes and where the structure of an institution alienates the tutor from the critical dialectic of education and turn her into an assessor of skills. Without openness and mutual respect, conflict emerges and the basis of trust dissolves into rancour and mistrust for all stakeholders in the provision of university higher education.

However, mutual trust need not be morally dependent on reciprocity, neither is it always rational or conscious. In its various forms it may be context-bound, power-ascribed or enduring (Fukuyama, 1986; Misztal, 1996). It is embedded in the contractualism of the social contract. It can have a short or long duration, for the length of the formal or tacit contract, or have its duration shortened by a failure to comply. Its intensity can be plotted as a continuum of checks and balances over time (Gibbs and Murphy, 2009), yet by nature is instrumental unless it seeks to be moral mutual trust. Then, a different teleological set of criteria needs to be considered. Moral mutual trust requires more than merely relying on others. It implies, according to Baier (1986: 235), that 'one leaves others the opportunity to harm one… and also shows one's confidence that they will not take it. Reasonable trust will require good grounds for such

confidence in another's goodwill'. If moral trust is missing, contemplating even a small risk to an expected outcome—specifically in relation to a highly cherished aim—may prove intolerable.

This second form of mutual moral trust often involves offering up one's vulnerability to others on very limited information, in the belief that the relationship will not be exploited. It is an empathetic form of trust, derived from the Kantian categorical rather than his hypothetical maxim of treating individuals as ends in themselves and others as we would ourselves wish to be treated. It is central to the premise that one of the ethical responsibilities of higher education is its role in revealing, for and with students, the nature of their desires for themselves and for the society to which they will contribute. For the purposes of this analysis, mutual moral trust will be termed 'empathetic trust' and the hypothetical, utilitarian form of trusting only in the functional competency of parties, their skilfulness at activities, as 'competence of trust'. I am not drawing here an evaluative distinction between both forms of trust, as each is important to educational relationship. Yet I want to emphasise a difference and a requirement for both to be bases of educational institutional provision if they are to retain the more generalised trust in the indeterminate nature of educational provision. Who knows what students will learn, and can we trust that it will not be harmful to society in general?

Competence of trust

Competence of trust is based on the utilitarian premise of enlightened self-interest. It shares some of the outcomes of acts of empathetic trust, but only where benefit, immediate or deferred, accrues to the initiator of the act. Competence of trust differs from mere confidence for competence is a prerequisite for communication where trust is a condition of specific actions based on this confidence (Farini, 2012). Its value in fostering relationships is that it stands superficially in the place of empathetic trust and is only shown to be amoral when issues of

personal benefit are confronted by acts of generosity to others. For example, to be considered as trust-competent, one would be capable of fulfilling an entrusted task such as giving correct travel directions to a stranger (also see Luhmann's (2000) distinction between confidence and trust). We need to believe that there is generally no malicious intent when the instructions are given and that, if they prove wrong, the giver was merely incompetent and not morally deceitful.

As Pettit (1995) observes, our reliance on the competence of trust is based on belief in the ultimately trustworthy disposition of the person in whom we trust. Should there be any erosion of the foundations upon which we build our assumptions of trust (for Pettit, loyalty, virtue and prudence), what settles for competence of trust will dilute any value attached to it. Pettit terms this trust deceit as 'the cunning of trust'.

Competence of trust is thus amoral and any argument made to express the relationship between student and academia in terms of competence leads it to be based on economic exchange (McMurtry, 1993). This leads to the calculative expediency of performativity rather than the discharge of a moral responsibility. It changes higher education from a mode of revealing, through trust based on unspecified obligation, to one where the economic exchange holds sway. The contractual model, at its core, redefines education not as the fusion of subject and object but in forms of instrumental competence that may deprive education of any teleological characteristics. From this position, the trust offer to higher education by its stakeholders is called into question, and more authoritarian controls are applied as trust in institutions is diluted, and accountability dominates.

Empathic trust

Empathetic trust allows the socialised self to face the risk posed by the integration of others in a social context by virtue of having an authentic self. Ordinarily, this comportment towards others is based on common experience of being-in-the-world. It is not ruled by the explicit embedding of specific durations, but is shown through a belief in the worth of others through trusting relationships. Empathetic trusting relationships endure the changing notion of self-ness and contribute to its revelation. Trusting in self or others is the essence of our autonomous everyday-ness and is central to a liberal educational ideal (Morgan, 1996). Those who betray this trust are socially vilified and its abuse to support academic hegemony or political expediency in education would seem morally indefensible. The employment rhetoric, which applies in reality only to certain professions, classes of degree and status of universities yet is presented as a universal consequence of any higher education experience, is one example; the loss of this trust amounts to betrayal, not disappointment.

Empathetic trust thus involves both the competence to undertake that which is entrusted by another party, the willingness to care for rather than harm that which is entrusted and an acceptance of one's own self-trustworthiness—that is, to trust in oneself to do such and such; to diet, to work all night or to be able to do, in the sense of confidence in one's ability. This definition can be shown to satisfy the necessary conditions for mutual empathy. It also has a resonance with the popular meaning of an empathetic emotional understanding between individuals, and is a more specific case of general respect as proposed by Williams (1973); it is more than the mere parade of trustworthiness (Baier, 1995). If perceived, this reduces the risk of trusting under complexity, for instance, when a first-time university student decided who to seek advisor on university choice.

Having refined the nation of trust, I will explore how this might be helpful in our understanding of the structural organisation of higher education. By looking for a balance between the forms of competence and empathetic trust, I investigate how some of its distinguishing features such as academic freedom, scholarly professionalism and student experience can be seen to offer the trustworthiness desired from the public, academics and students.

Public trust in higher education

Trust can act as a frame of reference that may be used to model the relationships of the higher education sector, including viewing it as a social institution. Within it, questions on the importance of self- and empathetic trust may be settled by the purpose of higher education. Certainly, in an educational framework, where the self has to expose its vulnerability to another, anything other than a moral duty of trusting care would potentially make the offer of education loaded and exploitative.

Tierney's (2006) work on academic organisational trust states that a 'cultural grammar of trust forces an analysis not only of structures but also the social contexts and histories in which these structures are embedded' (2006: 55). This grammar offers a framework to develop a notion of organisational trust culture built around notions of structure, environment and values, where formal–informal decision-making occurs in a perceptually complex and changing context over time. These perceptions determine the level and forms of trust offered and reflect the shared experience of the university. For Tierney, the shared experience offers a 'common interpretation of events, fosters shared interests in the organisation, allows for the communication of cultural facts, emerges from reciprocity and mutuality that are based in structures and beliefs, and cannot be summarized as rational' (2006: 64). This shared experience runs through different networks, formal and informal, and determines how the use of power is perceived and responded to. These

shared experiences are framed by the universities' external environment, between constituents within the university, and between the formal and informal networks. The system reacts according to its own structures to this environmental irritation and notwithstanding the instability of the environment which is sometimes purposely not noticed by the system.

The notion of public trust development in universities and the trust universities have a duty to create in terms of a student experience involves: competency in marketing of the university to its external environment; its own governance and quality assurance; and the reciprocity of its faculty trust, with its management and academic freedom. Competency alone would treat the students and academics as the means to an end of instrumental skill, well suited to explicit economic goals. This, however, is foolhardy and undermines trust in the university—not least because actually securing jobs for all or most of students is beyond a university's own competence. If higher education is to be more and retain a distinctive place in society, warranting the provision of resources, it must find time to empathise with the students in its academic community, nurturing them and engaging in helping them flourish as responsible citizens. This is a special, historical function and is the basis on which society allows then a degree of flexibility in the way they behave and the use they make of resources. To fail to do this would lead the public, government and students themselves to mistrust the privileges they are afforded. This is evident in the competency-only trust model of many for-profit universities where the economic self-interest of students and organisations dominates.

The interacting relationships of public trust involves State, university and student and society at large and while this model is simplistic, it captures the overlapping roles and illustrates how the nature of empathetic trust and self-trust can emerge at the level of both the social institution and the individual. This relationship is fragile and can be easily disrupted by deliberate ambiguity

about the trustworthiness of the system to deliver what is required of it. If the State loses trust in its relationships with higher education, then the role of higher education in creatively questioning, and thus shaping, the nature of the State is in danger of being lost. The dialogue between higher education and state then becomes a one-way monologue of ideology delivered by the force of the financial rather than the intellectual.

Evidence for such a position is provided by Vidovich and Currie (2011) when considering the relationship between governance and trust in Australian universities. Building on the Tierney model mentioned earlier, they maintain that 'there is a need to examine the complex interrelationships between *external* and *internal environments*, between accumulating *economic* and *social capital* and between *structural* and *cultural* change in a context of globalisation' (2011: 54, *itals* in the original). Woelert and Yates (2014) come to similar conclusions insofar as the imposition of metrics to measure the activities involved in academic endeavour with the intent of increasing the visibility of accountability and competency tends to reduce trust in the system. Such concerns are also shared by Maassen and Stensaker (2015) in the development of trust in international quality assurance. They argue that to rely on strong rational instrumental mechanisms might fail to secure the desired trust in the system, and that a diverse and flexible mechanism for building trust may be the way to deal with this complex problem.

The more explicit move to external accountability and a reduction of internal self-determination of higher education has been described by Trow (1996: 12) as 'a kind of mass degradation ceremony, involving the transformation of academic staff… into employees, mere organisational personnel'. This exchanges the acceptance of professional skills and reflective practice for a simpler control through the mechanism of competence-based models, favoured for their ease of audit and comparability. In terms of this chapter it places competence of trust too far from that

which gives it meaning: empathetic trust. The response from higher education cannot be whether or not to co-operate with the state's changes, but how to do so. Its task in such co-operation is how to retain its reputation for academic autonomy and excellence for its students while negotiating a stronger reputation with the state to secure future funding.

Gambetta's (1988: 229) analysis is penetrating on this point. He would acknowledge that an unwilling co-operation between higher education and state leads to loss of trust between parties and goes further, asserting that any knowledge of the coercion will reduce the trust that others have in this forced co-operation. This 'introduces an asymmetry which disposes of mutual trust and promotes instead power and resentment'. As Baier (1986: 241) observes, 'Trust is much easier to maintain than it is to get started and is never hard to destroy'. Bok's (1978: 33) analysis of the relationship between personal and institutional is illuminating on this point. She states, 'Trust in some degree of veracity functions as a foundation of relationships among human beings: when this trust shatters or wears away, institutions collapse' (*ibid*).

Academic offering and the student experience

The most comprehensive discussion of trust within the confines of academic teaching practices is provided by Curzon-Hobson. He argues that trust is a fundamental element in the pursuit of higher learning, for it is only through a sense of trust (a form of trust close to my term empathetic trust) that students will embrace an empowering experience of freedom, and the exercise of this freedom requires students and their teachers to take a risk:

> It challenges students to think and act according to their own perceptions without recourse to recitation or transcending ideals. This sense of freedom and the experience of risk is that which underpins students' projections to realise their unique potentiality. It requires a sensation of trust that is

> different from that which forms the bases of prescriptive accountability mechanisms, and is in fact marginalised by such practices. (Curzon-Hobson, 2002: 226)

Indeed, Carvalho and de Oliveira Mota (2010) identify what might be termed empathic trust and loyalty in higher education institutes (HEIs) as a foundational premise for student engagement. The development of trust within educational institutions and the sector is important to the study of higher education, yet they claim 'research on HEIs has yet to include student trust as an antecedent of student loyalty' (2010: 146). Perhaps this is because, as Kovac and Kristiansen (2010: 276) add, 'it seems that researchers across specific disciplines are in agreement that trust is a theoretically and methodologically elusive, context-dependent, multilevel, discipline—as well as culturally and historically changeable—phenomenon".

Self-trusting

A feature of empathetic trust is the development of self-trust or confidence in students, going beyond the provision of pedagogical and research skills. It allow students to verify for themselves through critical analysis and appraisal if they are 'over-trusting' others because of their ascribed competency or status and to check that they are being treated with respect and honesty. It requires confidence in reflection and in the personal decision on what to accept as worthy of trust and respect. Self-trustworthiness is the basis of independently knowing one's world and being in that world. Lehrer (1997: 5) encapsulates this as being able to 'consider myself worthy of trust in what I accept and prefer'. Yet, as we have seen, Kovac and Kristiansen question the boundaries of such trust, suggesting that excessive trust 'might conflict with and sabotage the development of the basic learning processes, such as the ability of students to think critically' (2010: 277). This is evident when students cease to question what is offered to them in

lectures, where they trust that what is covered in a course is all that is needed to master a subject or expect an examination to only cover what is presented through the course lectures seek to alleviate uncertainty rather than exploring it. In the UK, in 2015, there have been a number of such cases, for example at Exeter University.

Linking this work with the work of Hardin (2006) on the negative aspect of excess or blind trust, it can be argued that this overtrust is not misplaced trust, which can be resolved, but a trust where the dynamics of interpersonal trust draw either of the parties to the trust relationship into an uncomfortable exchange because of lack of appreciation of the full understanding of the relationship to the body of knowledge or lecture notes. Skinner et al. (2014) suggest that it is a 'dilemma from which it is difficult to extricate oneself; where the very nature of trust means that most of the options available as a response are neither viable nor attractive' (2014: 207). What seems to be an appropriate educational aim is to help identify and then to act to maintain a reasonable trust more in the trustworthy, not the untrustworthy.

Reflection, evaluation and monitoring are acts of autonomous thinkers of the type that liberal education, and indeed industry, claim to want. These reflective practices also contribute to self-belief, knowledge and truth, which differentiate the self from others. To trust in one's own ability to make decisions on one's own preference is central to liberal ideals of autonomous action. To be able to accept the responsibility that this implies, of constituting a reasoned world reality, facilitates the ontological integration of self. It encourages creativity, confidence and community through the negotiation of shared realities.

In building this reasoned network of preference and acceptances of 'truth', in the Heideggerian sense of everyday-ness of action, students reveal themselves both as self-trusting and as trustworthy people. To reach that position, they must be able to distinguish between their

justified confidence in their competence in certain arenas, whether prepositional or of capacity, and where they are incompetent. Students are likely to retain their self-trustworthiness only while that which they hold as trustworthy maintains its social validity; they are able to argue rationally for what they hold to be true or to assimilate into what their community holds as truth. This revelation process, as we have seen, is interpreted by Tierney (2006) as a 'grammar of trust'.

Consider the example where a student entrusts another to do an essay. If the result achieves the dual objectives of acquiring the desired mark and maintaining the necessary level of security to prevent disclosure, has the transaction been morally trustworthy or has it been an act of trust competence? The same may apply to a tutor securing a level of examination success for a student cohort by structuring lectures in such a way that students are informed of the examination questions in advance. In both these cases, those engaged in the contract are satisfied and the trustee's trust proves justified. The morality of the actions may, however, seem indefensible while recognising personal trust is sometimes built on indefensible actions.

Higher education should encourage self-trust through reasoned argument and debate. For students to be prepared to risk the socially constructed self to a process of authentic discovery of truth demands mutual and empathetic trust. Students need to trust that if they stray too far from the commonality of experience they will not be expelled or vilified as eccentrics or charlatans. This leads to empathy and, in the educational context, it manifests itself in the *praxis* of critical being (Barnett, 1997). The recognition of the existence of the potential for such mutuality is held in the collective goodwill of all stakeholders of the institution and is (or, perhaps, ought to be) the basis of public trust in higher education institutions.

In relation to students, academics have a dependency relationship with them that requires empathetic trust to avoid the potential for exploitation of their vulnerability. In relation to the

discipline, academics are trusted by their peers to share common goals that include: responsible conduct in research and authorship practices; no form of harassment; and the avoidance of conflict of interest, which erodes the fabric of trust on which worthwhile social interactions rely. A test of a profession's trust may take place when one of its numbers contravenes these principles. Is sanction dependent on incompetence assuming moral good intent or is it based on the competence of deceit: being caught?

Professionalism

Turning now to academic trust, there has been a steady flow of recent higher education literature concerning the nature of academic professionalism, both for existing practitioners and for those entering the education occupation/vocation/profession (e.g. Holroyd, 2000; Nixon et al., 2001; Clegg, 2003; Nicoll and Harrison, 2003; Macfarlane, 2004; Unwin, 2007; Kolsaker, 2008; Schuck et al., 2008; Cheng, 2009; Fitzmaurice, 2010; Tlili, 2010). As Unwin (2007) discusses, there are rapid change and threats when the forces of the market, managerialism and greater accountability take hold. This echoes Nicoll and Harrison (2003), who conclude that 'the focus has been on teaching as a "technical" activity, defined as competence and reflective practice in a particular domain. This has obscured the social and discursive practices through which a very particular sort of teacher identity may be produced' (p. 24). Moreover, it places competency over empathetic trust, disrupting the balance in the vocation of higher education teaching and researching.

As seems appropriate if the term 'professional' is to have any meaning other than skilful when used in reference to academics, they have a duty to pursue the well-being of their students. From Nixon's (2010) perspective, as expressed in the opening sentence of his 2010 Hope University lecture, the 'ethics of academic practice is derived from our understanding of the ends and

purposes of that practice' (p. 1). Nixon et al. (2001) have suggested the development of a new professionalism, framed not in 'terms of status and self-regulation, but in terms of values and practices' (p. 234), and '(T)he moral basis of the new professionalism lies, then, in our recognition of the freedom of all, academics included, to learn and to go on learning' (p. 237). This responsibility suggests that higher education practices should involve ethical behaviours as well as epistemological investigations and, I will later propose, require the exercise of ethical practical judgements in relation to others in the community. The virtue ethic approach has advocates within the higher education teaching literature.

Under the rubric of teaching with integrity, Macfarlane (2004) advocates practices of 'virtues compatible with reflective professionalism. This requires that the exercise of professional judgment is based on core moral virtues and conceived as a central duty to academic life' (pp. 127–128). Macfarlane identifies these as: respectfulness; sensitivity; pride; courage; fairness; openness; restraint; and collegiality. They require the professional to act with integrity and are achieved by a combination of qualities. He is clear that, within a changing context of higher education, making prudent choices is becoming ever more difficult. In conclusion, Macfarlane (2004) states that, despite the pressures, the community shares a vision of the moral virtues appropriate to teaching and suggests that encouraging 'their discussion and practice is probably the best way of ensuring that the forces that threaten to erode commitment to virtue are kept at bay' (p. 159). Fitzmaurice (2008) provides support for this proposition; she goes further to conclude that 'becoming a good academic practitioner is not just about mastery of techniques, approaches and methods but involves responsibility, professional intentions and ethical care' (p. 349). It requires empathetic trust!

However, as proposed, this professional relationship is currently in crisis and must adversely affect the nature of the other two relationships if it moves from empathy to expediency/competence. In relation to students, academics are authority figures and, in order to act in a professional sense, must not abuse the ascribed power. In relation to the discipline, the academics' personal integrity as scholars is tested by the tally of quality publications passing for academic achievement. Smith and Shoho (2007) found an inverse relationship between trust and academic rank, with professors being less trusting of their institutions than lower-ranking academics. This is clearly problematic if a culture of trust is to be developed.

In all professional relationships, academics will need to be trust-competent in at least two senses. First, they must be in possession of sufficient knowledge of the rules, procedures and consequences relevant to all those with an interest in their professional relationships. Second, they must be comprehensive and up to date in evaluating the full range of options before their students. However, they ought to encourage sufficient student scrutiny of what they say, thus they need to build a trust that transcends the comfort of a didactic relationship and favours one of critical engagement. The risk for tutors, however, is that challenging the customer-student proves uncomfortable, leaving him or her dissatisfied in not having answers provided. To achieve this, the relationship must also be grounded in empathetic trust. The cult of student satisfaction based on student experience might well work against the mission of an institution seeking to help students realise their potential, rather than realise a competency role model of an employable person.

These relationships demand that there must be a moral trustworthiness that stands behind this competent behaviour, giving motive and purpose to the role of the educator. In relation to the institution they are a duty of obligation, being trusted not to defame the reputation of the

institution; indeed, more positively, they are trusted to enhance it. In return, the institution ought to be trusted to treat them with respect. Given this mutual empathetic trust, both parties are able to show goodwill to themselves and to the student. However, a form of organisational trust more akin to reliance may develop that can coexist with 'contrived and perpetuated inequality' (Baier, 1995: 131). In such a climate, claims of jointly held goals as the basis of mutual trust need to be treated with suspicion to avoid insidious betrayal, cloaked in the guise of long-term obligation or the immediacy of shared threat.

Given the competitive free market in which academic professionals are ever more frequently having to operate, it is difficult to see how empathetic trust in the sense of moral obligation could be allowed to predominate if not seen as a core ethical, as well as scholarly, competency. It seems to be only realisable in a profession with an ethic of service that is not corrupted by an overwhelming pressure to compete in the current marketplace, and is not an expression of power achieved by altering the cost and benefit options confronting the stakeholders. It cannot be developed by a regime of surveillance and examination through which the academic community exerts power over students.

Trust competence alone is a necessary but insufficient condition and, if treated as such, leads to a contracted output model of higher education rather than one of professional competence based on moral obligation. The development of empathetic trust is invoked in everyday contexts that commonly fall outside the rule-governed jurisdiction of codes of conduct. For example, the personal vulnerability involved in exposing what one does not know necessarily causes a state of uncertainty, only resolvable through self-trust. To nurture this goes beyond the professional competence of, say, the lawyer or the doctor, whose function is to reduce personal uncertainty. Credentials alone are not sufficient to establish the basis for empathetic trust to flourish. As

McNamee (1997: 70) states, ‘there are no rules to trust: it is almost a matter of volitional necessity’. Professional conduct in the sense of rule following will not increase the reputation of the higher educational professional: what will is a trusting disposition, and an atmosphere of trust in which it can thrive.

Academic freedom

The moral purpose of the academy has traditionally turned on the notion of academic freedom and tenure (De George, 2003) and both are under threat (Roepnack and Lewis, 2007). Tierney (2004) defines the concept:

> academic freedom pertains to the right of faculty to enjoy considerable autonomy in their research and teaching. The assumption is to search for truth without hindrance, and be able to report their findings regardless of what those finding may be. (p. 250)

We should go further, for the right to academic freedom is a right neither to indulge in unencumbered free speech nor to ‘address people rudely or to assault them with chants and slogans. It is a right to present, refer to and argue for (or against) any claim or belief in an “appropriately academic manner”’ (Barrow, 2009: 181). It is within the context of an institutional role and involves following as well as maintaining historic academic practices (rites) that distinguish the agent as being an academic in what is done, and the intent of those practices. These rituals include checking the evidence, not misrepresenting other peoples’ views, seeking clarification and restraint in making claims, and arriving at well-argued conclusions in a transparent fashion. Such arguments need to be persuasive and compelling, but not manipulative, and should respect the vulnerability of others.

Scholarly behaviour including both competence and empathy, as suggested above, is a precondition, an obligation, before one can claim to be in an academic field. It is not anyone's right to be called an academic, whether by their own designation or by others. Claiming academic freedom turns on a set of trust obligations and places the academician as a role model for citizenry. As for Andreescu (2009), the main argument for academic freedom revolves around the role of the academic institution in society and the role of the individual to flourish as, in order 'to fulfil the role of cultivating the individual, of edifying him or her intellectually as well as morally, of helping him or her become an autonomous human being, academics need a considerable measure of freedom' (p. 509).

Concluding remarks—trust at the foundations of higher education

Trust has, in the main, been considered as a virtue of 'good' higher education between student, tutor and institution. In this chapter I have suggested a more nuanced notion of trust and proposed that a balance in the two forms of trust—competency and empathetic—can act as a frame of reference to model the relationships of the higher education sector, including viewing it as a social institution. Within it, there are opportunities to question the importance of self and one's contribution to society and this might well help settle the purpose of higher education and why it ought to have public trust. Certainly, in an educational framework where the self has to expose its vulnerability to another, anything other than a moral duty of trusting care would make the offer of education potentially loaded and exploitative.

The most important question for the future of higher education seems to be, 'can we trust those who control it to deliver anything other than competencies aimed at securing employment, thus placing education in the hands of the industrialist, or is there a role for the professional educationalist?' To hold someone accountable for their use of state-sponsored education in the

sense of value (of money, citizenship and morality) requires a clear statement of the expected responsibility and output. A competence model of education has benefits for those who feel attracted to this economic expediency model. However, the appropriateness of such business comparisons is debatable and, even if valid, changes not only the process of becoming but the very nature of the autonomous individual.

I have suggested here that the competency notion of accountability in education through a cost benefit analysis, in its various forms, should complement but not dominate notions of the educated person. As a primary aim of higher education, it replaces moral trust with the amoral notion of competence of trust, which ultimately dilutes the moral dimension of higher education. The issue has to be addressed through an assessment of what we expect from our higher education institutions: quite simply, in what can we trust?

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